

V. R. E. A. C

Victims' Rights Enforcement Advisory Commission

Minutes

Thursday, March 5, 2015

1ST Floor Training Center, Chief State's Attorney's Office

300 Corporate Place, Rocky Hill, CT

10:00a.m. – 12:00p.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions --- Call to Order 10:08 a.m.

Members Present: Natasha M. Pierre, Chair; Linda J. Cimino; Laura Cordes; Carleton J. Giles; Anne Mahoney, Esq.; Karen Martucci (on behalf of Scott Semple); Jessica Pizzano; Bethany Phillips, Esq.; Dora B. Schriro; Hon. Elliot Solomon (on behalf of Hon. Patrick L. Carroll, III)

Also in Attendance were Valina Carpenter, Vanessa DeLeon and Dave Snyder

Members Absent: Mario T. Gaboury; Ana Gonzalez; Janice Heggie Margolis; Karen Jarmoc; Kevin Kane; Jillian Knox; Dawn Luddy; James C. Rovella; Andrew Woods

2. Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes of the December and January meetings were sent via email. Copies will be provided at the next Commission Meeting in April for review and approval.

3. Outstanding Commission Items

N. Pierre asked the commission members for any additional input to add to the list of outstanding commission items for further discussion.

L. Cimino and V. Carpenter from Office of Victim Services added the following items:

- Review of "Not Guilty by Reason of Insanity" (NGRI). In their experience victims feel that this is not a charge nor an appropriate punishment because if the defendant is returned to competency they could be released from an institution, rather than being imprisoned. A. Mahoney mentioned that these individuals are rarely released. A. Mahoney suggested the potential creation of a FAQ pamphlet on this topic.

- o **Action item:** A. Mahoney will gather more information to help explain what NGRI entails.

- C.G.S. 54-220 (a)(3) - Notice of Rights. Under this statute the Office of Victim Services is the only agency required to serve this notice to victims. L. Cimino recommends that all crime victim service providers should provide such notice.
- The creation of a Post-Conviction packet or notice for victims so they fully understand the offender's sentence and potential timeline for hearings and/or release. K. Martucci from the Department of Correction stated that any offender sentenced to two or more years is given an accountability plan containing dates and information regarding their eligibility dates and information regarding release. A plan can be implemented to share this information with the victims as well or a pamphlet can be created to provide explanation of possible types of releases. Laura Cordes from CONNSACS explained that they receive several calls regarding post-conviction issues and she fully supports this idea.
 - o **Action item:** K. Martucci will develop a draft pamphlet for the commission to review.

Laura Cordes (CT Sexual Assault Crisis Service Centers) added the following items:

- Amend C.G.S. 54-203 (b)(17) to reflect that the Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner Program (SAFE) has been established.
- Establish a task force to review best practices for understanding the trauma of victims, interviewing techniques, investigating and the prosecution of sex assault cases.
- Remove the statute of limitations regarding child sex abuse cases. L. Cordes mentioned many victims miss their opportunity to seek justice because time has run out. Currently the statute of limitation for a minor who was a victim of sexual assault is 30 years after the age of 18.

Jessica Pizzano (Survivors of Homicide-SOH) added the following item:

- Universal rules for Victim Impact Statements. In her experience, courts or judges have different rules regarding the format of victim impact statements.

Jim Clarke (Victim Rights Center of Connecticut) reviewed his recommendations that were presented at the November 2014 Commission meeting (see attached).

- Statutory language to enforce Crime Victims' Rights by allowing a victim to petition the court to seek remedy for a violation (see section 2 of attachment). N. Pierre asked the commission if they wanted constitutional or statutory enforcement. J. Clarke suggested both.
 - o **Action item:** This topic will be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting.

- Amend existing law by requiring all state and local police departments receive training in the awareness and prevention of sexual assault, stalking and intimate partner violence and trauma informed response. Current law requires this for higher education institutions. Discussion ensued about current trainings offered by POST, Judicial Branch and CONNSACS. Carleton Giles suggested review of the POST curriculum to see what trainings are mandated and how it can be improved.
 - o **Action item:** N. Pierre will contact Commissioner Schirio to seek the POST curriculum for review.

4. Other Business

- Second Chance Society Presentation: N. Pierre saw Commissioner Semple's presentation on the Department of Correction's plan to implement this proposal. N. Pierre asked if members were interested in seeing the presentation. The majority requested the presentation be made at the next commission meeting.
 - o **Action item:** N. Pierre and K. Martucci will coordinate on this issue.
- The schedule of all upcoming meetings was shared.
- Delegation forms were made available to commission members to assign a designee if desired. Designees will be able to attend and vote on matters in the absence of the commission member.

5. Public Comment

- No public present for comment.

Meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.